



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Minutes of Special Meeting of the HSE Board Meeting
Ref: National Management Team Response to COVID – 19

A meeting of the Board of the Health Service Executive was held on Friday 6 March 2020 at 11:00am in Dr Steevens Hospital, Dublin 8.

Present: Ciarán Devane (Chairperson), Deirdre Madden (Deputy Chairperson) dialled in, Aogan Ó Fearghaíl, Brendan Lenihan, Fergus Finlay, Fergus O' Kelly, Fiona Ross, Yvonne Traynor, Sarah McLoughlin.

Apologies: Tim Hynes.

In Attendance for Board Meeting: Paul Reid (CEO), Anne O'Connor (COO), Colm Henry (CCO) Paul Connors (ND Communications) Dara Purcell (Secretary), Niamh Drew.

Joined Meeting: Dr Kevin Kelleher, Specialist in Public Health.

Chair welcomed members to a special meeting of the Board to discuss the National Management Team Response to COVID – 19.

The CEO advised the Board that COVID-19 has been identified as one of the principal risks faced by the HSE and that the HSE is taking all possible steps to appropriately respond to the outbreak in the provision of preventative measures and quality care to the public. Regular update reports to the Board on COVID-19 are being provided by the CEO to the Board after each NCMT (National Crisis Management Team) meeting (2x weekly). The CEO confirmed that he will continue to apprise the Board on the outbreak through these update reports and briefings.

National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHEM)

The CEO informed the Board on the establishment of NPHEM by the Government which is chaired by the Department of Health's Chief Medical Officer and has absolute authority in the oversight and management of the nation's response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The HSE is represented on this team by Public Health, Emergency Management, Senior Operations and Communications.

The CEO presented an overview to the Board on the HSE management structure that is currently in place to manage the HSE response to COVID-19.

Senior Officials Group (SOG)

The Senior Officials Group is a cross government group comprised of Secretary Generals from all across Government Departments and senior directors from the major Government agencies. The HSE is represented on this group by the Chief Operations Officer. This group is updated on the outbreak through reports from the COO and from the DoH NPHET.

HSE National Crisis Management Team (NCMT)

The NCMT is chaired by the CEO and leads the HSE response to the COVID-19 outbreak. This is multi-disciplinary team consisting of key EMT members and National Directors from Operations, Clinical, Strategy, HR, Finance, Procurement Communications. This team is supported by experts from Public Health, NVRL, and an external Virology expert from TCD/St James'. To date the NCMT has met 15 times since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak. 13 of these were in person and 2 were by teleconference.

HSE Senior Operations Team

Chaired by the Chief Operations Officer and directs all of the agreed COVID-19 operations responses and planning. This team directs the activities of all Hospital, Community and Ambulance Services via the Area Crisis Management Teams.

HSE Senior Clinical COVID-19 Group

Clinical Group chaired by the Chief Clinical Officer and directs all of the Clinical Response teams within the HSE in the response to the COVID-19 outbreak. This includes the Public Health teams (NPHORT and HPSC) and the Clinical Directors throughout the delivery system.

HSE Communications Group

Chaired by the National Director of Communications and directs all of the HSE external and internal communications in support of the response to the COVID-19 outbreak. This group is the direct liaison to the inter-departmental Communications Group for COVID-19 led by the DoH.

The CEO provided the Board with an overview of the actions that the NCMT have undertaken, including communications with the GP community regarding algorithms and guidance; engagement with key service providers e.g. disability services, nursing homes, and providing ongoing guidance in relation to COVID-19; provided PPE to all GP Practices and Public Health Facilities – 13,000+ packs; identified and evaluated suitable isolation facilities at all Acute Hospitals; a regular media briefing regime through the extension of the weekly Winter Plan Media Briefing; identified and trained a cadre of Public Health Doctors to act as spokespersons at a national and local level and Public Health developing a model based on international models and learning to anticipate the possible and likely impacts of a surge in demand in the event of COVID-19 moving beyond the Containment phase; services adjusting existing emergency planning to include the outputs from the Public Health models; established and now scaling call centre facilities through insource and outsource services to deal with rising levels of calls from the public; information Posters, videos and social media messaging for public and staff produced and promulgated; established HSE Environmental Health presence at all ports and airports to provide information and guidance to arriving passengers and coordinate public health responses to identified possible cases arriving; implemented Home Testing for COVID-19 through the National Ambulance Service and Community Operations; incorporated and reinforced the capacity of the National Immunisation Unit at the Mater Hospital Dublin.

The CEO provided the Board with a breakdown of costs to date of additional supplies which have been received or are due to be received. Items include gloves, gowns, masks, goggles, disinfectant wipes, hand gel and clinical waste bags costing in total approx. €23m.

The CEO also provided an update with regards to the staff costs noting that additional costs are being incurred on staffing costs, including agency and overtime costs. National Finance have established a dedicated group to monitor, report and control the expenditure in relation to COVID-19 to ensure all expenditure is appropriately approved and reported. All additional expenditure is approved by the CEO through the NCMT.

The Board were briefed with the plan that is currently underway for anticipating a surge and the Board reviewed the following scenarios: Ongoing containment with limited sustained transmission; Mitigation with widespread sustained transmission with increasing pressures on healthcare and widespread sustained transmission with overburdened healthcare system.

The Chairperson thanked the Board Members, CEO, Secretariat and members of the EMT for their contributions and the meeting concluded at 12.30pm.

Signed: Ciarán Devane
Ciarán Devane
Chairperson

Date: 27/03/2020